February, 2007. The Indian High Commission has taken up with the Government of UK the issue of allowing the Indian doctors to apply for the first round of recruitment under the system of current Modernising Medical Careers launched by UK Department of Health. The Department of Health has agreed to consider the request of keeping the first round open for Indian doctors. In the first round, NHS proposes to recruit around 10,000 doctors. Further efforts are on to ensure that IMGs are also allowed to appear unconditionally for the second round of recruitment that is likely to take place in April, 2007.

Indian prisoners in Pakistan

*56. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any reports of inhuman treatment meted out to Indian prisoners in Pakistan;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken to address this situation?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Instances of inhuman treatment of Indian prisoners have come to the notice of consular officers of our mission in Islamabad from time to time. Pakistan authorities do not inform the Indian mission of the arrest of Indians and consular access is not given until their sentence is complete. In many cases, it is delayed even beyond that. According to available information, 95 Indians in Pakistani jails are yet to be given consular access. 378 fishermen and 144 civilian prisoners and 74 PoWs are still languishing in Pakistan jails. Indian prisoners released by Pakistan have reported ill-treatment during imprisonment.

(c) Government has consistently taken up the issue of the humane treatment and release of prisoners with Pakistan. During the Home Secretary-level talks on May 30-31, 2006 it was agreed to release all the remaining fishermen by 30 June 2006, exchange lists of civilian prisoners by 15 June 2006 and facilitate consular access by 31 July 2006 for subsequent release. As agreed, on 30 June 2006, India released

38 Pakistani civilian prisoners who had completed their sentence and provided consular access for the rest. Pakistan, however, released only 19 Indian civilian prisoners. During the Foreign Secretary-level talks on November 14-15, 2006 in New Delhi both sides agreed to release eligible civilian prisoners and fishermen whose nationality had been confirmed by December 25, 2006. During the visit of External Affairs Minister to Pakistan on January 13-14, 2007, both sides agreed to establish a committee on prisoners, comprising retired judges of the superior judiciary to visit jails in the two countries and propose steps to ensure humane treatment and expedite release of prisoners who have completed their prison terms.

Cancellation of Mobile Phone Connections

†*57. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that forty lakh mobile phone connections have been cancelled by his Ministry;

(b) if so, whether these connections were given on the basis of false and incomplete documents;

(c) if so, whether anybody has been held guilty of this crime; and

(d) the measures taken by Government to prevent recurrence of such irregularity in future?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) to (d) As per license conditions, the mobile telephone service providers are required to ensure adequate verification of each and every customer before enrolling him as subscriber. Instructions in this regard have been issued from time to time by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to all the service providers. This includes obtaining proof of identity and address from the subscribers.

Based on the observations of special drive conducted in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad and in Haryana Telecom Circle

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.